



A Better Way Foundation is a Connecticut non-profit organization that is dedicated to a sensible shift in drug policy from one of incarceration to substance abuse treatment and public health.

www.abwfct.org

In Favor of Raised H.B. No. 6511: An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission Regarding the Enhanced Penalty For the Sale or Possession of Drugs Near Schools, Day Care Centers and Public Housing Projects.

Good morning Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address the Judiciary Committee and its distinguished members. A Better Way Foundation has worked on reforming drug free school zones since its inception in 1999. Our membership is over 8,000 across the state representing various stakeholders directly and indirectly negatively impacted by drug free school zones and the mandatory minimum associated.

A Better Way Foundation, supports ALL of the recommendation of Raised H.B. No. 6511: An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission Regarding the Enhanced Penalty for the Sale or Possession of Drugs Near Schools, Day Care Centers and Public Housing Projects. We believe it **should also, include removing public housing; which had bipartisan support during 2012 session; a new Racial Ethnic Impact Statement, this information will show the ineffectiveness and the racial discrimination the current law presents; and eliminate mandatory minimums allowing substance abuse treatment for offenders.**

The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee (LPR&I) concluded:

“Mandatory minimum sentencing laws achieve few of their stated objectives and DO NOT WORK.”

The researchers also found that:

- In certain urban and “urban-like” suburban areas, there is no incentive for people selling drugs to move away from school, day-care center or public housing because almost the entire city is as a drug zone.
- Drug-free zones are more common in non-white communities. Research determined that cities where more than 25% of the residents were Black or Latino have zones that are an average of six times larger than the average zones in cities where the population is less than 10% Black or Latino.

Thank you for your attention to this important issues and your commitment to judicial matters in the state of Connecticut.

A Better Way Foundation, ask that you pass ALL of the recommendation of Raised H.B. No. 6511: An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission Regarding the Enhanced Penalty for the Sale or Possession of Drugs Near Schools, Day Care Centers and Public Housing Projects with the addition of **REMOVING PUBLIC HOUSING AND MANDATORY MINIMUMS, and a new Racial Ethnic Impact Statement.**

Respectfully,

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